

However, since the 1996 welfare reform law, States have been able to expand categorical eligibility beyond its traditional bounds. That law created TANF to replace the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, AFDC, program, which was a traditional cash assistance program. TANF is a broad-purpose block grant that finances a wide range of social and human services.

TANF gives States flexibility in meeting its goals, resulting in a wide variation of benefits and services offered among the States. SNAP allows States to convey categorical eligibility based on receipt of a TANF "benefit," not just TANF cash welfare. This provides States with the ability to convey categorical eligibility based on a wide range of benefits and services. TANF benefits other than cash assistance typically are available to a broader range of households and at higher levels of income than are TANF cash assistance benefits.

In total, 43 jurisdictions have implemented what the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, has called "broad-based" categorical eligibility. These jurisdictions generally make all households with incomes below a State-determined income threshold eligible for SNAP. States do this by providing households with a low-cost TANF-funded benefit or service such as a brochure or referral to an "800" number telephone hotline.

There are varying income eligibility thresholds within States that convey "broad-based" categorical eligibility, though no State has a gross income limit above 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. In all but three of these jurisdictions, there is no asset test required for SNAP eligibility. Categorically eligible families bypass the regular SNAP asset limits.

However, their net incomes (income after deductions for expenses) must still be low enough to qualify for a SNAP benefit. That is, it is possible to be categorically eligible for SNAP but have net income too high to actually receive a benefit. The exception to this is one- or two-person households that would still receive the minimum benefit.

During the decade of the 2000s, there were a number of proposals to restrict categorical eligibility based on receipt of TANF benefits. These proposals would have limited TANF-based categorical assistance to households receiving TANF-funded cash assistance. The proposal was made by the Bush Administration in its farm bill proposals and several budget submissions. It passed the House in a budget reconciliation bill in 2005 but was not part of that year's final reconciliation package, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-171).

Mr. Speaker, let's not punish those in need any longer! Help the poor—don't show the dark side of America.

#### RECOGNIZING EQUAL PAY DAY

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 19, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Equal Pay Day and to stress my commitment to closing the wage gap between men and women once and for all. Women are critical to our Nation's eco-

nomical success and it is essential for us to redouble our efforts to end discriminatory practices in the workplace. Although many positive steps have been taken and much change has been effectuated, there is much more that can be and should be done.

On this day, let us give attention to how the wage gap affects women, families and the economy. Today, more than ever, women are equal, if not primary, income earners in most American families. Yet women in our economy and our work force are still earning just 77 cents on every dollar paid to men. Couple the gender gap with statistics on race and it is even worse. African American women earn a mere 64 cents on the dollar, while Hispanic women receive an appalling 56 cents on the dollar compared to men. In states across the country, women are collectively losing tens of billions of dollars annually—money that could alleviate the financial strain countless families are facing in this tough economy.

We must put an end to discriminatory practices in the workforce once and for all. Expanding economic opportunities for women is critical to building an economy that restores security for middle class families. We must promote such an economy by encouraging the advancement of women in the workforce and by rewarding their efforts equally. We must ensure that when a woman seeks higher employment she is able to attain it without being discriminated against based on her gender and more importantly that she receive equal pay for equal work. We must ensure that equal pay and equal opportunity go hand in hand with hard work in the twenty-first century.

In the 1950's a sole income earner, historically a man, could support an entire family. Those days are long past, not ever to return. We are living in an era where dual incomes are not a luxury, but rather the necessary condition to sustain a middle class status.

I applaud President Obama's commitment to ensuring that women are treated equally in the workforce and paid fairly for their work. From signing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, to creating the National Equal Pay Task Force, President Obama has fought for equality for women in the workforce, and there is no reason why this Congress should not be equally committed to the cause of pay equality for women.

In a time where women's labor force participation has increased dramatically and where families are becoming increasingly reliant on women's incomes due to the rise of living costs, it makes no sense that pay disparities between men and women still persist. Women should not have to face greater risks for income insecurity than men. The reality is that over the course of her lifetime, these pay discrepancies can cost a woman and her family up to hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost wages, reduced pensions, and reduced Social Security benefits. I call this "gender theft." The Republican majority apparently believe this is an acceptable state of affairs.

The statistics are very clear; we cannot have a vibrant society if women are not doing well. The success of American women is critical for the success of American families and the American economy. Consequently, when women face barriers to participation in the workplace and marketplace, it affects all Americans.

Unfortunately, rather than concentrating on eliminating such discrepancies and ensuring

equality, the Republican majority has instead been fixated on limiting women's rights and freedoms. This war on women is hurtful and destructive, wastes time, and makes no economic sense. It makes America weaker, not stronger. It certainly does not reflect a kinder and gentler America.

Mr. Speaker, on this day—Equal Pay Day—let us resolve to honor women for the work they do to support and sustain their families. Let us start by paying women equally for the honorable work they do. It is through our hard work to ensure equal treatment of all women in the workforce, marketplace, and society as a whole that we can resoundingly voice our commitment to support American women and families.

#### SPORTSMEN'S HERITAGE ACT OF 2012

SPEECH OF

**HON. DAN BOREN**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 17, 2012*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4089) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing and shooting:

Mr. BOREN. Madam Chair, as a Congressman serving on the House Committee on Natural Resources and the past Co-Chairman of the bipartisan Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, I support America's sportsmen and the acclaimed activities of hunting and recreational fishing and shooting through the enactment of H.R. 4089.

H.R. 4089 is essential to recognizing the importance of and facilitating the expansion and enhancement of hunting and recreational fishing and shooting. It is a compilation of four different bills (H.R. 2834, H.R. 3440, H.R. 991 and H.R. 1558) that promote and advance these time-honored traditions. The Sportsmen's Heritage Act reaffirms that hunting and recreational fishing and shooting are important activities by providing a sound legislative foundation for the advancement of America's sporting heritage.

Seventy-five years ago, the conservation community, including hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and related industries, supported the use of funds from an excise tax on firearms and ammunition—along with the dedicated revenue from hunting and fishing licenses—to be used exclusively by state fish and wildlife agencies to professionally manage fish and wildlife populations and provide access for sportsmen and the larger public to enjoy the benefits of this management. This funding mechanism was eventually expanded to include the fishing and boating communities as well as the archery community. Accordingly, these groups produced the American System of Conservation Funding: a unique "user pays—public benefits" approach. This user-pays funding strategy has produced numerous public benefits including: abundant fish and wildlife populations, access to public lands and clean waters, improved fish and wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, wetland protection and associated water filtration and flood retention functions, improved soil and water conservation, shooting ranges and boating access facilities that are available for the